***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

PRESS OFFICE

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Met. Office forecast to beat the bug

Met. Office computer equipment has been given a clean bill of health in a recent investigation into its readiness for the millennium date change. Under Action 2000's traffic light scheme, The Met. Office's UK weather forecasts and services have been rated 100% blue by the National Audit Office. The investigation looked at The Met. Office's management programme for 63 separate Y2K projects, all of which were awarded their final compliance certificates during the summer.

A comprehensive Business Continuity Programme is now in place. It has established a wide range of enhanced procedures (a Millennium Operating Regime) to deal with special challenges that the millennium weekend may bring. The Millennium Operating Regime includes new and improved contingency and emergency plans that will be co-ordinated by The Met. Office's Y2K Executive Management Team. Operating 24 hours a day during the critical millennium roll-over period, this team will resolve any difficulties that might occur, ensuring that customers and the public continue to receive the high-quality forecasts and services they have come to expect.

The Met. Office has worked on two other millennium initiatives in recent months. Late in the summer a Millennium Weather Service was launched to help key sectors of the UK's national infrastructure (e.g. the emergency services) with their own plans for the New Year period. This service consists of statistics and weather forecasts for 30 different regions of the UK.

Secondly, two Action 2000 mentoring events were held at its Bracknell HQ in recent months. These events were well received and help spread the millennium date change message to a number of small and medium sized enterprises in the Thames Valley.

Peter Ewins, Chief Executive of The Met. Office, is confident that it will be 'business as usual' over the New Year and says: "It is our priority to ensure that, as well as our individual customers, the nation as a whole will not be affected by millennium failure at The Met. Office. Safety is of course paramount; a weather forecasting failure can result in serious problems for our customers and the public alike. We are working closely with other National Infrastructure sectors, offering advice on how winter weather might affect their services over this busy holiday period, and sharing information on millennium compliance tactics. We must continue to work together to ensure that the UK does not suffer material disruption, allowing business to continue as normal and everyone to enjoy the New Year celebrations."

For media enquiries contact:
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Notes:

1. Action 2000's 'Traffic Light' colour coding system is:

White	Unable to form assessment with the present level of information
Red	The assessment indicates severe risk of material disruption to infrastructure processes and that timely rectification may not be possible.
Amber	The assessment indicates some risk of material disruption to infrastructure processes but there is an agreed containment plan to rectify shortcomings.
Blue	The assessment has not identified any risk of material disruption to theinfrastructure process.

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